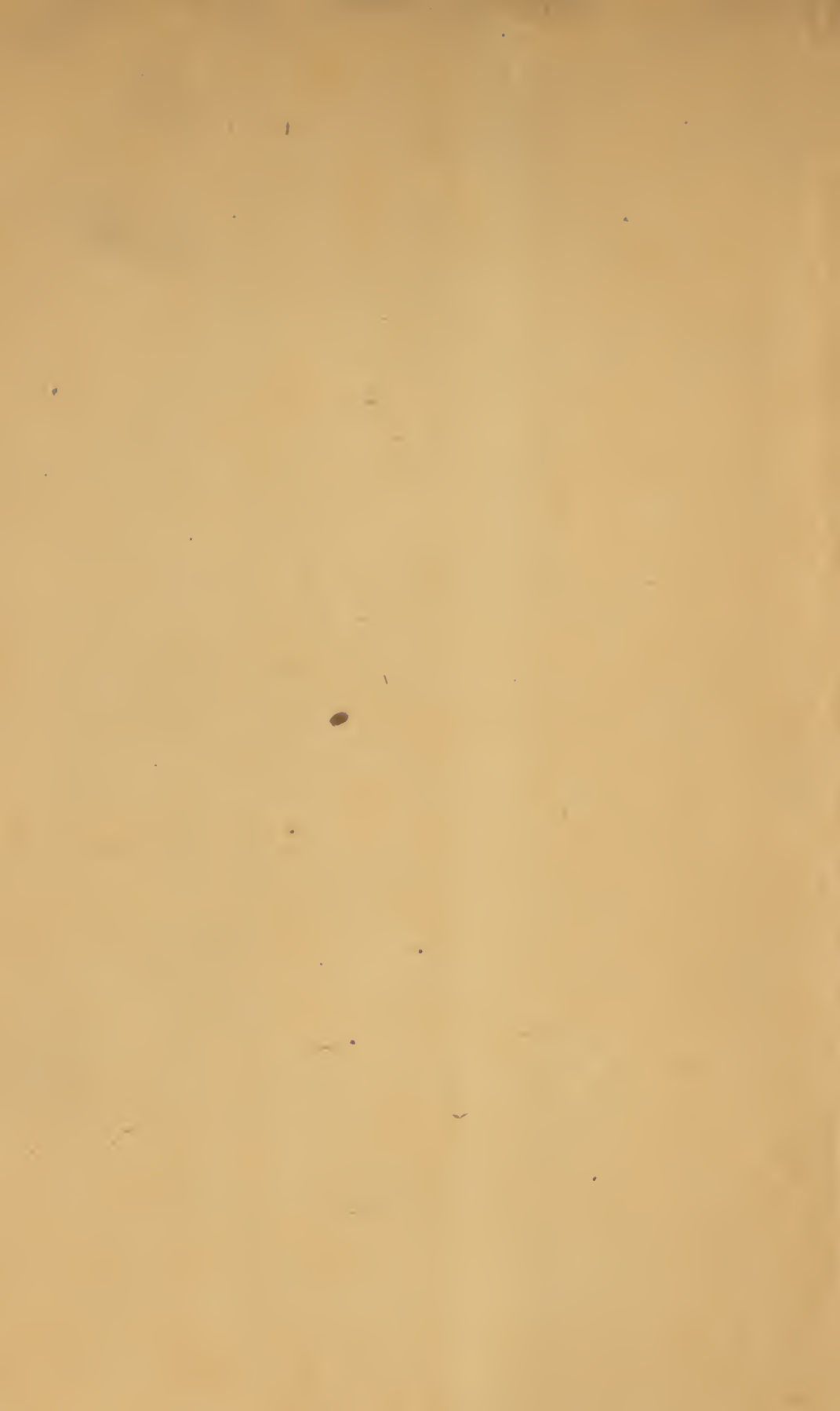


Brown (J. M.)

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box 58.



thought you would want money; so I saved it up. You shall not be in debt a day longer. Now mount thy horse, and carry it to those good souls; only, for my sake, take the gardener with thee, — I have no groom now but he, — and both well armed."

"What! go this very day?"

"Ay, this very hour. I can bear thy absence for a day or two more, — I have borne it so long; but I cannot bear thy plighted word to stand in doubt a day, no, not an hour. I am your wife, sir, your true and loving wife: your honor is mine, and is as dear to me now as it was when you saw me with Father Leonard in the Grove, and read me all

awry. Don't wait a moment. Begone at once."

"Nay, nay, if I go to-morrow, I shall be in time."

"Ay, but," said Mrs. Gaunt, very softly, "I am afraid if I keep you another hour I shall not have the heart to let you go at all; and the sooner gone, the sooner back for good, please God. There, give me one kiss, to live on, and begone this instant."

He covered her hands with kisses and tears. "I'm not worthy to kiss any higher than thy hand," he said, and so ran sobbing from her.

He went straight to the stable, and saddled Black Dick.

## INDIAN MEDICINE.

EVERY one who has fed his boyish fancy with the stories of pioneers and hunters has heard of the character known among Indians as the "medicine-man." But it may very likely be the case that few of those familiar with the term really know the import of the word. A somewhat protracted residence among the Blackfoot tribe of Indians, and an extensive observation of men and manners as they appear in the wilder parts of the Rocky Mountains and British America, have enabled the writer to give some facts which may not prove wholly uninteresting.

By the term "medicine" much more is implied than mere curative drugs, or a system of curative practice. Among all the tribes of American Indians, the word is used with a double signification, — a literal and narrow meaning, and a general and rather undefined application. It signifies not only physical remedies and the art of using them, but second-sight, prophecy, and preternatural power. As an adjective, it embraces the idea of supernatural as well as remedial.

As an example of the use of the word in its mystic signification, the following may be given. The *horse*, as is well known, was to the Indian, on its first importation, a strange and terrible beast. Having no native word by which to designate this hitherto unknown creature, the Indians contrived a name by combining the name of some familiar animal, most nearly resembling the horse, with the "medicine" term denoting astonishment or awe. Consequently the Blackfeet, adding to the word "Elk" (*Pounika*) the adjective "medicine" (*ts*), called the horse *Pounika-ma-ta*, i. e. Medicine Elk. This word is still their designation for a horse.

With this idea of medicine, and recollecting that the word is used to express two classes of thoughts very different, and separated by civilization, though confounded by the savage, it will not surprise one to find that the medicine-men are conjurers as well as doctors, and that their conjurations partake as much of medical quackery as does their medical practice of affected incantation. As physicians, the medi-

cine-men are below contempt, and, but for the savage cruelty of their ignorance, undeserving of notice. The writer has known a man to have his uvula and palate torn out by a medicine-man. In that case the disease was a hacking cough caused by an elongation of the uvula; and the remedy adopted (after preparatory singing, dancing, burning buffalo hair, and other conjurations) was to seize the uvula with a pair of bullet-moulds, and tear from the poor wretch every tissue that would give way. Death of course ensued in a short time. The unfortunate man had, however, died in "able hands," and according to the "highest principles of [Indian] medical art."

Were I to tell how barbarously I have seen men mutilated, simply to extract an arrow-head from a wound, the story would scarce be credited. Common sense has no place in the system of Indian medicine-men, nor do they appear to have gained an idea, beyond the rudest, from experience.

In their quality of seers, however, they are more important, and frequently more successful persons, attaining, of course, various degrees of proficiency and reputation. An accomplished dreamer has a sure competency in that gift. He is reverently consulted, handsomely paid, and, in general, strictly obeyed. His influence, when once established, is more potent even than that of a war chief. The dignity and profit of the position are baits sufficient to command the attention and ambition of the ablest men; yet it is not unfrequently the case that persons otherwise undistinguished are noted for clear and strong powers of "medicine."

Of the three most distinguished medicine-men known to the writer, but one was a man of powerful intellect. Even this person preferred a somewhat sedentary, and what might be called a strictly professional life, to the usual active habits of the hunting and warring tribes. He dwelt almost alone on a far northern branch of the Saskatchewan River, revered for his gifts, feared for his power, and always approached with something

of reluctance by the Indians, who firmly believed the spirit of the gods to dwell within him. He was an austere and taciturn man, difficult of access, and as vain and ambitious as he was haughty and contemptuous. Those who professed to have witnessed the scene told of a trial of power between this man — the Black Snake, as he was called — and a renowned medicine-man of a neighboring tribe. The contest, from what the Indians said, must have occurred about 1855.

The rival medicine-men, each furnished with his medicine-bag, his amulets, and other professional paraphernalia, arrayed in full dress, and covered with war-paint, met in the presence of a great concourse. Both had prepared for the encounter by long fasting and conjurations. After the pipe, which precedes all important councils, the medicine-men sat down opposite to each other, a few feet apart. The trial of power seems to have been conducted on principles of animal magnetism, and lasted a long while without decided advantage on either side; until the Black Snake, concentrating all his power, or "gathering his medicine," in a loud voice commanded his opponent to die. The unfortunate conjurer succumbed, and in a few minutes "his spirit," as my informant said, "went beyond the Sand Buttes." The only charm or amulet ever used by the Black Snake is said to have been a small bean-shaped pebble suspended round his neck by a cord of moose sinew. He had his books, it is true, but they were rarely exhibited.\*

The death of his rival, by means so purely non-mechanical or physical, gave the Black Snake a pre-eminence in "medicine" which he has ever since maintained. It was useless to suggest

\* The Mountain Assinaboins, of which tribe the Black Snake is if living a distinguished ornament, were visited more than a hundred years since by an English clergyman named Wolsey, who devised an alphabet for their use. The alphabet is still used by them, and they keep their memoranda on dressed skins. With the exception of the Cherokees, they are, perhaps, the only tribe possessing a written language. They have no other civilization.



poison, deception, or collusion, to explain the occurrence. The firm belief was that the spiritual power of the Black Snake had alone secured his triumph.

I mentioned this story to a highly educated and deeply religious man of my acquaintance. He was a priest of the Jesuit order, a European by birth, formerly a professor in a Continental university of high repute, and beyond doubt a guileless and pious man. His acquaintance with Indian life extended over more than twenty years of missionary labor in the wildest parts of the west slope of the Rocky Mountains. To my surprise, (for I was then a novice in the country,) I found him neither astonished, nor shocked, nor amused, by what seemed to me so gross a superstition.

"I have seen," said he, "many exhibitions of power which my philosophy cannot explain. I have known predictions of events far in the future to be literally fulfilled, and have seen medicine tested in the most conclusive ways. I once saw a Kootenai Indian (known generally as Skookum-tamahe-rewos, from his extraordinary power) command a mountain sheep to fall dead, and the animal, then leaping among the rocks of the mountain-side, fell instantly lifeless. This I saw with my own eyes, and I ate of the animal afterwards. It was unwounded, healthy, and perfectly wild. Ah!" continued he, crossing himself and looking upwards, "Mary protect us! the medicine-men have power from Sathanas."\*

This statement, made by so respectable a person, attracted my attention to what before seemed but a clumsy

species of juggling. During many months of intimate knowledge of Indian life, — as an adopted member of a tribe, as a resident in their camps, and their companion on hunts and war-parties, — I lost no opportunity of gathering information concerning their religious belief and traditions, and the system of *medicine*, as it prevails in its purity. It would be foreign to the design of this desultory paper to enter at large upon the history of creation as preserved by the Indians in their traditions, the conflicts of the Beneficent Spirit with the Adversary, and the Indian idea of a future state. With all these, the present sketch has no further concern than a mere statement that "medicine" is based upon the idea of an overruling and all-powerful Providence, who acts at His good pleasure, through human instruments. Those among Christians who entertain the doctrine of Special Providences may find in the untutored Indian a faith as firm as theirs, — not sharply defined, or understood by the Indian himself, but inborn and ineradicable.

The Indian, being thoroughly ignorant of all things not connected with war or the chase, is necessarily superstitious. His imagination is active, — generally more so than are his reasoning powers, — and fits him for a ready belief in the powers of any able mediciner. On one occasion, Meldram, a white man in the employ of the American Fur Company, found himself suddenly elevated to high rank as a seer by a foolish or petulant remark. He was engaged in making a rude press for baling furs, and had got a heavy lever in position. A large party of Crow Indians who were near at hand, considering his press a marvel of mechanical ingenuity, were very inquisitive as to its uses. Meldram, with an assumption of severity, told them the machine was "snow medicine," and that it would make snow to fall until it reached the end of a cord that dangled from the lever and reached within a yard of the ground. The fame of so potent a medicine spread rapidly through the Crow

\* I do not feel at liberty to give the name of this excellent man, now perhaps no more. In 1861, he lived and labored, with a gentleness and zeal worthy of the cause he heralded, as a missionary among the Kalspelm Indians, on the west slope of the Rocky Mountains. Such devotion to missionary labor as was his may well challenge admiration even from those who think him in fatal error. His memory will long be cherished by those who knew the purity of his character, his generous catholicity of spirit, and the native and acquired graces of mind which made him a companion at once charming and instructive.

nation. The machine was visited by hundreds, and the fall of snow anxiously looked for by the entire tribe. To the awe of every Indian, and the astonishment of the few trappers then at the mouth of the Yellowstone, the snow actually reached the end of the rope, and did not during the winter attain any greater depth. Meldram found greatness thrust upon him. He has lived for more than forty years among the Crows, and when I knew him was much consulted as a medicine-man. His chief charms, or amulets, were a large bull's-eye silver watch, and a copy of "Ayer's Family Almanac," in which was displayed the human body encircled by the signs of the zodiac.

The position and ease attendant upon a reputation for medicine power cause many unsuccessful pretenders to embrace the profession; and it would seem strange that their failures should not have brought medicine into disrepute. In looking closely into this, a well-marked distinction will always be found between *medicine* and the *medicine-man*,—quite as broad as is made with us between religion and the preacher. I have seen would-be medicine-men laughed at through the camp,—men of reputation as warriors, and respected in council, but whose *forte* was not the reading of dreams or the prediction of events. On the other hand, I have seen persons of inferior intellect, without courage on the war-path or wisdom in the council, revered as the channels through which, in some unexplained manner, the Great Spirit warned or advised his creatures.

Of course it is no purpose of this paper to uphold or attack these peculiar ideas. A meagre presentation of a few facts not generally known is all that is aimed at. Whether the system of Indian medicine be a variety of Mesmerism, Magnetism, Spiritualism, or what not, others may inquire and determine. One bred a Calvinist, as was the writer, may be supposed to have viewed with suspicion the exhibitions of medicine power that almost daily presented themselves. And while, in very

numerous instances, they proved to be but the impudent pretensions of charlatans, it must be conceded, if credible witnesses are to be believed, that sometimes there is a power of second-sight, or something of a kindred nature, which defies investigation. Instances of this kind are of frequent occurrence, and easily recalled, I venture to say, by every one familiar with the Indian in his native state. The higher powers claimed for medicine are, in general, doubtfully spoken of by the Indians. Not that they deny the possibility of the power, but they question the probability of so signal a mark of favor being bestowed on a mere mortal. Powers and medicine privileges of a lower degree are more readily acknowledged. An aged Indian of the Assiniboin tribe is very generally admitted, by his own and neighboring tribes, to have been shown the happy hunting-grounds, and conducted through them and returned safely to the camp of his tribe, by special favor of the Great Spirit. He once drew a map of the Indian paradise for me, and described its pleasant prairies and crystal rivers, its countless herds of fat buffalo and horses, its perennial and luxuriant grass, and other charms dear to an Indian's heart, in a rhapsody that was almost poetry. Another, an obscure man of the Cat-head Sioux, is believed to have seen the hole through which issue the herds of buffalo which the Great Spirit calls forth from the centre of the earth to feed his children.

Medicine of this degree is not unfavorably regarded by the masses; but instances of the highest grades are extremely rare, and the claimants of such powers few in number. The Black Snake and the Hootenai, before referred to, are, if still alive, the only instances with which I am acquainted of admitted and well-authenticated powers so great and incredible. The common use of medicine is in affairs of war and the chase. Here the medicine-man will be found, in many cases, to exhibit a prescience truly astounding. Without attempting a theory

to account for this, a suggestion may be ventured. The Indian passes a life that knows no repose. His vigilance is ever on the alert. No hour of day or night is to him an hour of assured safety. In the course of years, his perceptions and apprehensions become so acute, in the presence of constant danger, as to render him keenly and delicately sensitive to impressions that a civilized man could scarce recognize. The Indian, in other words, has a development almost like the instinct of the fox or beaver. Upon this delicate barometer, whose basis is physical fear, impressions (moral or physical, who shall say?) act with surprising power. How this occurs, no Indian will attempt to explain. Certain conjurations will, they maintain, aid the medicine-man to receive impressions; but how or wherefore, no one pretends to know. This view of *minor medicine* is the one which will account for many of its manifestations. Whether sound or defective, we will not contend.

The medicine-man whom I knew best was Ma-què-a-pos (the Wolf's Word), an ignorant and unintellectual person. I knew him perfectly well. His nature was simple, innocent, and harmless, devoid of cunning, and wanting in those fierce traits that make up the Indian character. His predictions were sometimes absolutely astounding. He has, beyond question, accurately described the persons, horses, arms, and destination of a party three hundred miles distant, not one of whom he had ever seen, and of whose very existence neither he, nor any one in his camp, was before apprised.

On one occasion, a party of ten voyageurs set out from Fort Benton, the remotest post of the American Fur Company, for the purpose of finding the Kaimè, or Blood Band of the Northern Blackfeet. Their route lay almost due north, crossing the British line near the Chief Mountain (Nee-na-stà-ko) and the great Lake O-màx-éen (two of the grandest features of Rocky Mountain scenery, but scarce ever seen by whites), and extending indefinitely beyond the Sas-

katchewan and towards the tributaries of the Coppermine and Mackenzie Rivers. The expedition was perilous from its commencement, and the danger increased with each day's journey. The war-paths, war-party fires, and similar indications of the vicinity of hostile bands, were each day found in greater abundance.

It should be borne in mind that an experienced trapper can, at a glance, pronounce what tribe made a war-trail or a camp-fire. Indications which would convey no meaning to the inexperienced are conclusive proofs to the keen-eyed mountaineer. \*The track of a foot, by a greater or less turning out of the toes, demonstrates from which side of the mountains a party has come. The print of a moccasin in soft earth indicates the tribe of the wearer. An arrow-head or a feather from a war-bonnet, a scrap of dressed deer-skin, or even a chance fragment of jerked buffalo-meat, furnishes data from which unerring conclusions are deduced with marvellous facility.

The party of adventurers soon found that they were in the thickest of the Cree war-party operations, and so full of danger was every day's travel that a council was called, and seven of the ten turned back. The remaining three, more through foolhardiness than for any good reason, continued their journey, until their resolution failed them, and they too determined that, after another day's travel northward, they would hasten back to their comrades.

On the afternoon of the last day, four young Indians were seen, who, after a cautious approach, made the sign of peace, laid down their arms, and came forward, announcing themselves to be Blackfeet of the Blood Band. They were sent out, they said, by Ma-què-a-pos, to find three whites mounted on horses of a peculiar color, dressed in garments accurately described to them, and armed with weapons which they, without seeing them, minutely described. The whole history of the expedition had been detailed to them by Ma-què-a-pos. The purpose of the



journey, the *personnel* of the party, the exact locality at which to find the three who persevered, had been detailed by him with as much fidelity as could have been done by one of the whites themselves. And so convinced were the Indians of the truth of the old man's medicine, that the four young men were sent to appoint a rendezvous, for four days later, at a spot a hundred miles distant. On arriving there, accompanied by the young Indians, the whites found the entire camp of "Rising Head," a noted war-chief, awaiting them. The objects of the expedition were speedily accomplished; and the whites, after a few days' rest, returned to safer haunts. The writer of this paper was at the head of the party of whites, and himself met the Indian messengers.

Upon questioning the chief men of the Indian camp, many of whom afterwards became my warm personal friends, and one of them my adopted brother, no suspicion of the facts, as narrated, could be sustained. Ma-què-a-pos could give no explanation beyond the general one,—that he "saw us coming, and heard us talk on our journey." He had not, during that time, been absent from the Indian camp.

A subsequent intimate acquaintance with Ma-què-a-pos disclosed a remarkable medicine faculty as accurate as it was inexplicable. He was tested in every way, and almost always stood the ordeal successfully. Yet he never claimed that the gift entitled him to any peculiar regard, except as the instrument of a power whose operations he did not pretend to understand. He had an imperfect knowledge of the Catholic worship, distorted and intermixed with the wild theogony of the red man. He would talk with passionate devotion of the Mother of God, and in the same breath tell how the Great Spirit restrains the Rain Spirits from drowning the world, by tying them with the rain-bow. I have often seen him make the sign of the cross, while he recounted, in all the soberness of implicit belief, how the Old Man (the God of the Black-

feet) formed the human race from the mud of the Missouri,—how he experimented before he adopted the human frame, as we now have it,—how he placed his creatures in an isolated park far to the north, and there taught them the rude arts of Indian life,—how he staked the Indians on a desperate game of chance with the Spirit of Evil,—and how the whites are now his peculiar care. Ma-què-a-pos's faith could hardly stand the test of any religious creed. Yet it must be said for him, that his simplicity and innocence of life might be a model for many, better instructed than he.

The wilder tribes are accustomed to certain observances which are generally termed the tribe-medicine. Their leading men inculcate them with great care,—perhaps to perpetuate unity of tradition and purpose. In the arrangement of tribe-medicine, trivial observances are frequently intermixed with very serious doctrines. Thus, the grand war-council of the Dakotah confederacy, comprising thirteen tribes of Sioux, and more than seventeen thousand warriors, many years since promulgated a national medicine, prescribing a red stone pipe with an ashen stem for all council purposes, and (herein was the true point) an eternal hostility to the whites. The prediction may be safely ventured, that every Sioux will preserve this medicine until the nation shall cease to exist. To it may be traced the recent Indian war that devastated Minnesota; and there cannot, in the nature of things, and of the American Indian especially, be a peace kept in good faith until the confederacy of the Dakotah is in effect destroyed.

The Crows, or Upsàraukas, will not smoke in council, unless the pipe is lighted with a coal of buffalo chip, and the bowl rested on a fragment of the same substance. Their chief men have for a great while endeavored to engraft teetotalism upon their national medicine, and have succeeded better than the Indian character would have seemed to promise.

Among the Flat-Heads female chas-



tity is a national medicine. With the Mandans, friendship for the whites is supposed to be the source of national and individual advantage.

Besides the varieties of medicine already alluded to, there are in use charms of almost every kind. When game is scarce, medicine is made to call back the buffalo. The Man in the Sun is invoked for fair weather, for success in war or chase, and for a cure of wounds. The spirits of the dead are appeased by medicine songs and offerings. The curiosity of some may be attracted by the following rude and literal translation of the song of a Black-foot woman to the spirit of her son, who was killed on his first war-party. The words were written down at the time, and are not in any respect changed or smoothed.

"O my son, farewell !  
 You have gone beyond the great river,  
 Your spirit is on the other side of the Sand Buttes ;  
 I will not see you for a hundred winters ;  
 You will scalp the enemy in the green prairie,  
 Beyond the great river.  
 When the warriors of the Blackfeet meet,  
 When they smoke the medicine-pipe and dance the  
     war-dance,  
 They will ask, 'Where is Isthumaka?—  
 Where is the bravest of the Mannikappi?'  
 He fell on the war-path.  
     Mai-ram-bo, mai-ram-bo.

"Many scalps will be taken for your death ;  
 The Crows will lose many horses ;  
 Their women will weep for their braves,  
 They will curse the spirit of Isthumaka.  
 O my son ! I will come to you  
 And make moccasins for the war-path,  
 As I did when you struck the lodge  
 Of the 'Horse-Guard' with the tomahawk.  
 Farewell, my son ! I will see you  
 Beyond the broad river.  
     Mai-ram-bo, mai-ram-bo," etc., etc.

Sung in a plaintive minor key, and in a

wild, irregular rhythm, the dirge was far more impressive than the words would indicate.

It cannot be denied that the whites, who consort much with the ruder tribes of Indians imbibe, to a considerable degree, their veneration for medicine. The old trappers and voyageurs are, almost without exception, observers of omens and dreamers of dreams. They claim that medicine is a faculty which can in some degree be cultivated, and aspire to its possession as eagerly as does the Indian. Sometimes they acquire a reputation that is in many ways beneficial to them.

As before said, it is no object of this paper to defend or combat the Indian notion of medicine. Such a system exists as a fact ; and whoever writes upon American Demonology will find many fruitful topics of investigation in the daily life of the uncontaminated Indian. There may be nothing of truth in the supposed prediction by Tecumseh, that Tuckabatchee would be destroyed by an earthquake on a day which he named ; the gifts of the "Prophet" may be overstated in the traditions that yet linger in Kentucky and Indiana ; the descent of the Mandans from Prince Madoc and his adventurous Welchmen, and the consideration accorded them on that account, may very possibly be altogether fanciful ; but whoever will take the trouble to investigate will find in the *real* Indian a faith, and occasionally a power, that quite equal the faculties claimed by our civilized clairvoyants, and will approach an untrodden path of curious, if not altogether useful research.

## THE DEATH OF SLAVERY.

O THOU great Wrong, that, through the slow-paced years,  
 Didst hold thy millions fettered, and didst wield  
 The scourge that drove the laborer to the field,  
 And look with stony eye on human tears,  
 Thy cruel reign is o'er;  
 Thy bondmen crouch no more  
 In terror at the menace of thine eye;  
 For He who marks the bounds of guilty power,  
 Long-suffering, hath heard the captive's cry,  
 And touched his shackles at the appointed hour,  
 And lo! they fall, and he whose limbs they galled  
 Stands in his native manhood, disenthralled.

A shout of joy from the redeemed is sent;  
 Ten thousand hamlets swell the hymn of thanks;  
 Our rivers roll exulting, and their banks  
 Send up hosannas to the firmament.  
 Fields, where the bondman's toil  
 No more shall trench the soil,  
 Seem now to bask in a serener day;  
 The meadow-birds sing sweeter, and the airs  
 Of heaven with more caressing softness play,  
 Welcoming man to liberty like theirs.  
 A glory clothes the land from sea to sea,  
 For the great land and all its coasts are free.

Within that land wert thou enthroned of late,  
 And they by whom the nation's laws were made,  
 And they who filled its judgment-seats, obeyed  
 Thy mandate, rigid as the will of fate.  
 Fierce men at thy right hand,  
 With gesture of command,  
 Gave forth the word that none might dare gainsay;  
 And grave and reverend ones, who loved thee not,  
 Shrank from thy presence, and, in blank dismay,  
 Cloked down, unuttered, the rebellious thought;  
 While meaner cowards, mingling with thy train,  
 Proved, from the book of God, thy right to reign.

Great as thou wert, and feared from shore to shore,  
 The wrath of God o'ertook thee in thy pride;  
 Thou sitt'st a ghastly shadow; by thy side  
 Thy once strong arms hang nerveless evermore.  
 And they who quailed but now  
 Before thy lowering brow



